

Top Secret (16)

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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Vietnam

Top Secret

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26 April 1967

25X1

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Information as of 1600

26 April 1967

25X1

HIGHLIGHTS

Premier Ky is apparently confident that his prospects for the presidential nomination are increasing. Several sharp clashes between US and Communist forces in I Corps occurred on 25-26 April, and on 26 April the US lost four planes over North Vietnam for the third consecutive day.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam: Several sharp clashes were reported between US and Communist forces in northern I Corps on 25-26 April (Paras. 1-4). Recent intelligence suggests Communist main force units may be prepared to begin extensive offensive operations in the strategic central highlands (Paras. 5-9). [REDACTED] suggests that the Communist "spring campaign" may have been interrupted because of a shortage of ammunition (Paras. 10-11). The weekly review of South Vietnam battle statistics (Para. 12).

25X1

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam: Premier Ky's plans for conducting a presidential campaign apparently are going forward as his confidence in his own prospects increases (Paras. 1-3). [REDACTED]

25X1

Labor pressure is developing in Saigon for a 40-percent increase in wages to offset the effects of inflation (Paras. 5-6).

III. Military Developments in North Vietnam: DRV missile and artillery units destroyed four more US planes on 26 April for the third consecutive day (Para. 1). Improved North Vietnamese tactics and the fact that US planes are striking targets close to heavily defended Hanoi and Haiphong account for the losses (Paras. 2-3).

IV. Other Communist Military Developments: There is nothing of significance to report.

26 April 1967

Approved For Release 2003/08/08 : CIA-RDP79T00826A001900010017-7

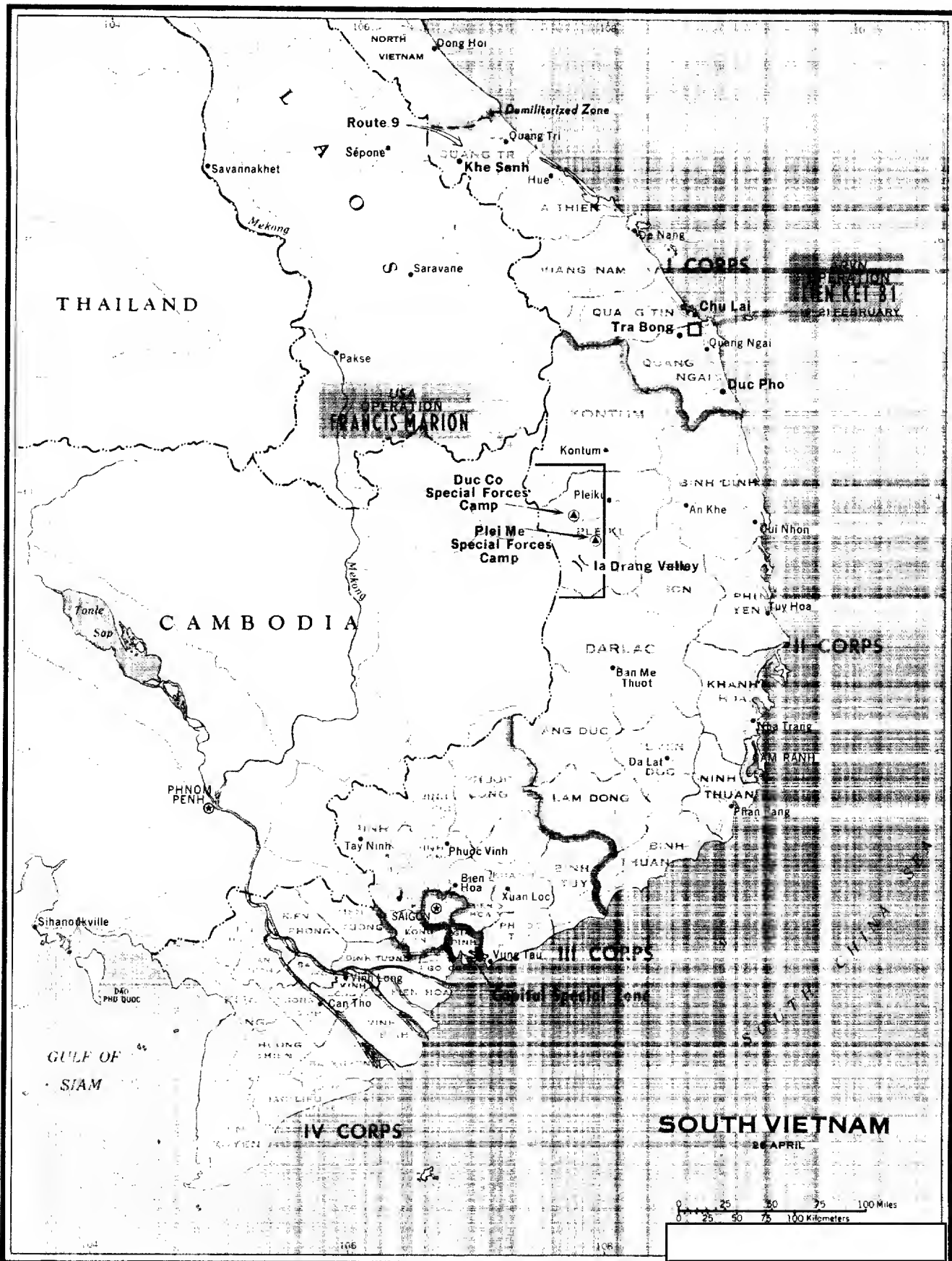
V. Communist Political Developments: There is nothing of significance to report.

ANNEX

South Vietnam Battle Statistics
1963 to week of 16-22 April 1967
-Weapons and Personnel Losses
-Viet Cong Attacks and Incidents

26 April 1967

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Several scattered skirmishes between US and Communist forces have been reported in western Quang Tri Province. Early on 25 April, an enemy force of undetermined size attacked a US Marine truck convoy which was transiting a narrow pass on Route 9 about seven miles east of Khe Sanh. Supported by reinforcements and artillery and armed helicopter fire, the marines forced the enemy to withdraw. Five Americans were reported killed and 22 wounded. Two vehicles were damaged.

2. Later, in an adjacent area, one of the reinforcing companies encountered an estimated company-size Communist force in well-prepared positions. During an ensuing three-hour battle, nine marines were killed and eight wounded before the enemy retreated. A nearby US command post was hit by nearly 200 rounds of mortar fire early on 26 April, but no American casualties were reported.

3. Enemy casualties in this series of encounters have not been reported, but may be high as a result of the heavy American firepower which forced the enemy to withdraw in each incident.

4. Farther south in I Corps, a US Army company from Task Force OREGON established contact on 25 April with a large Communist force about four miles northwest of Duc Pho in coastal Quang Ngai Province. At least 21 enemy soldiers were killed and nine weapons seized during heavy fighting which continued through the night of 25-26 April. Initial US casualties are listed as two killed and 16 wounded.

26 April 1967

I-1

25X1

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25X1



7. Currently, seven US Army battalions are committed to the long-term border-surveillance campaign in Pleiku Province presently named Operation FRANCIS MARION. The apparent enemy strategy in the highlands is to force the deployment of US maneuver elements over a wide area of Kontum and Pleiku provinces so that attacks may be mounted against lightly defended US positions.

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[redacted] has stated that he knew of a major attack planned for the height of the southwest monsoon season during June and July. According to these plans, five NVA regiments and several separate battalions would strike Plei Me Special Forces camp and attempt to destroy reinforcing American troops.

9. This and other previous intelligence reports, together with the threat of impending inclement weather, may indicate that enemy military activity will be sharply intensified in the strategic central highlands in the near future. The recent deployment of US Army forces from the highlands to the northern provinces may further encourage the Communist planners.

26 April 1967

I-2

Approved For Release 2003/08/08 : CIA-RDP79T00826A001900010017-7

25X1

25X1

NVA 2nd Division Ammunition Shortages

10. Ammunition shortages forced the North Vietnamese Army's 2nd Division to interrupt its "spring campaign" in southern I Corps, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] early in March Viet Cong Military Region V Headquarters directed the 2nd NVA Division to draw new ammunition from depots near Tra Bong, Quang Ngai Province, and to be ready to resume operations by 20 April.

11. US military officers suggest that these shortages were probably the result of Operation LIEN KET 81 (16-21 February) near Chu Lai, Quang Tin Province, in which South Vietnamese Army forces killed 388 troops of the 21st NVA Regiment and the Headquarters, 2nd NVA Division.

Weekly Review of South Vietnam Battle Statistics

12. The week of 16-22 April compared with the week of 9-15 April:

I. Viet Cong Incidents

	<u>9-15 April</u>	<u>16-22 April</u>
Attacks	36	35
Battalion or larger.	3	0
Small Unit	33	35
Harassment	248	472
Terrorism	52	55
Sabotage	20	16
Propaganda	38	21
Antiaircraft	<u>385</u>	<u>258</u>
TOTAL INCIDENTS	779	857

26 April 1967

25X1

II. Casualties

	<u>VC/NVA</u>		<u>GVN</u>	
	<u>9-15 April</u>	<u>16-22 April</u>	<u>9-15 April</u>	<u>16-22 April</u>
Killed	1,511	1,081	287	228
Wounded	-----	-----	784	499
Missing/ Captured	-----	-----	<u>14</u>	<u>29</u>
TOTALS	1,511	1,081	1,085	756

	<u>US</u>		<u>FREE WORLD</u>	
	<u>9-15 April</u>	<u>16-22 April</u>	<u>9-15 April</u>	<u>16-22 April</u>
Killed	147	148	21	9
Wounded	1,141	1,031	91	2
Missing/ Captured	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
TOTALS	1,288	1,179	112	11

III. Weapons Captured

	<u>VC/NVA</u>		<u>GVN</u>	
	<u>9-15 April</u>	<u>16-22 April</u>	<u>9-15 April</u>	<u>16-22 April</u>
Individual	417	Not	151	223
Crew-Served	<u>28</u>	Reported	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>
TOTALS	445		155	226

26 April 1967

II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

Ky's Presidential Plans

25X1 1. [] Premier Ky is beginning to develop more confidence that he will win the military's presidential nomination with the help of senior officers of the Directorate and that the present impasse between himself and Chief of State Thieu over the nomination will be settled in an amicable manner. Ky claimed that a good friend of Thieu's had recently conducted an informal poll of the relative popularity of Ky and Thieu among the people and that the results showed Ky well ahead of Thieu. Furthermore, according to Ky, Thieu's friend reportedly told Thieu that, even if he were to gain the military nomination, he might not be able to win in a national election.

2. Two other reasons were advanced by Ky for the further weakening of Thieu's position as a possible candidate. These were supposed to be two serious mistakes made by Thieu in recent weeks. One of these was Thieu's floating of a "trial balloon" on the possible presidential candidacy of retired Lieutenant General Duong Van Minh (Big Minh); the other was Thieu's selection of a French hospital rather than a Vietnamese hospital for his recent appendectomy. Ky maintained that he is on close friendly terms with Thieu and that when Thieu finally makes up his mind, the two will be able to sit down and reach an agreement on Ky's nomination without rancor or loss of face for Thieu.

3. Ky also related that a military and civilian front group, which is working to promote his own candidacy, is now organized and would soon occupy space in Independence Palace. Regular meetings will soon commence to draw up a political platform appealing to various religious and ethnic groups, after which the group will turn its attention to the specifics of a presidential platform. Included among the military members of this front are major generals Linh Quang Vien, Nguyen Duc Thang, and Nguyen Bao Tri, and such civilians as former province chief Nguyen Huu Chi and journalist Le Van Tien.

26 April 1967

II-1

25X1

Approved For Release 2003/08/08 : CIA-RDP79T00826A001900010017-7

25X1

Labor Unrest in Saigon

5. Pressure is mounting among some labor unions in Saigon for a 40-percent increase in wages to offset the increase in the cost of living since mid-1966. Approximately 1,000 workers are now on strike in Saigon because employers are willing to grant only a 10-percent increase in wages, according to an official of the CVT Council. Precedent for a 40-percent pay hike has already been established with the recent grant of almost this amount to some 300 cigarette factory workers.

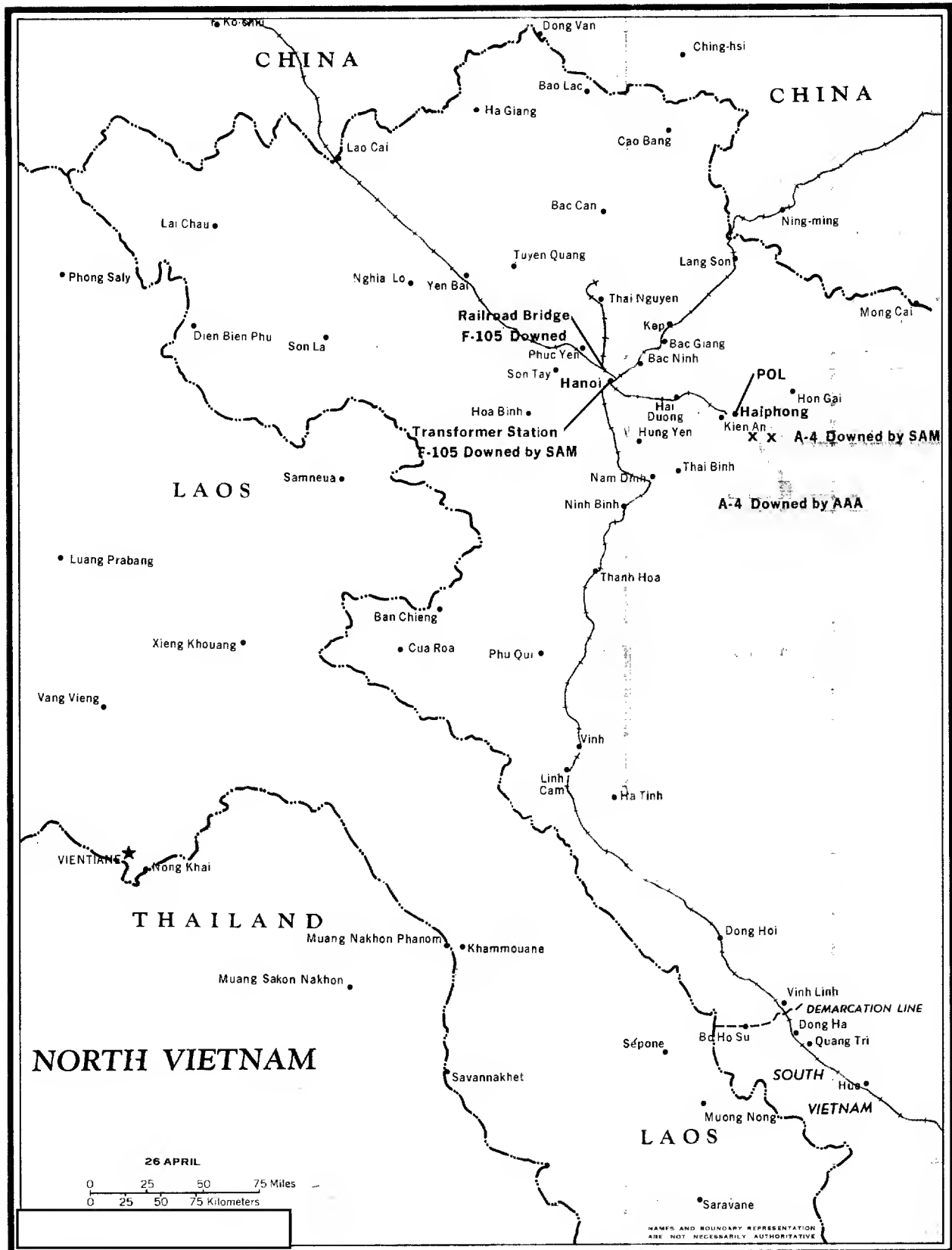
6. No demands for wage increases were voiced at the CVT Congress which ended on 22 April, possibly to avoid a confrontation between the national labor organization and the GVN. Although a GVN Labor Ministry official has branded the wage demands as a political ploy by Vo Van Tri, the secretary general of the CVT's Saigon General Council, to embarrass CVT president Tran Quoc Buu, the fact remains that the cost of living has risen in Saigon by about 124 percent since June 1966, and that rank-and-file members are reported restive.

26 April 1967

II-2

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25X1



66432 4-67 CIA

III. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH VIETNAM

1. Four US planes were lost for the third day in a row on 26 April as North Vietnamese air defense units attempted to blunt continued air attacks in the Hanoi and Haiphong complexes. US Navy planes once again attacked the major POL facility on the Western outskirts of Haiphong. Two A-4s were lost southeast of the city, one to a surface-to-air missile and one to ground fire. The air force struck Hanoi's main transformer station and a railroad bridge 4.6 miles north of the capital. One F-105 was downed by a SAM near the transformer station, and a second F-105 was lost to unknown causes on the bridge strike.

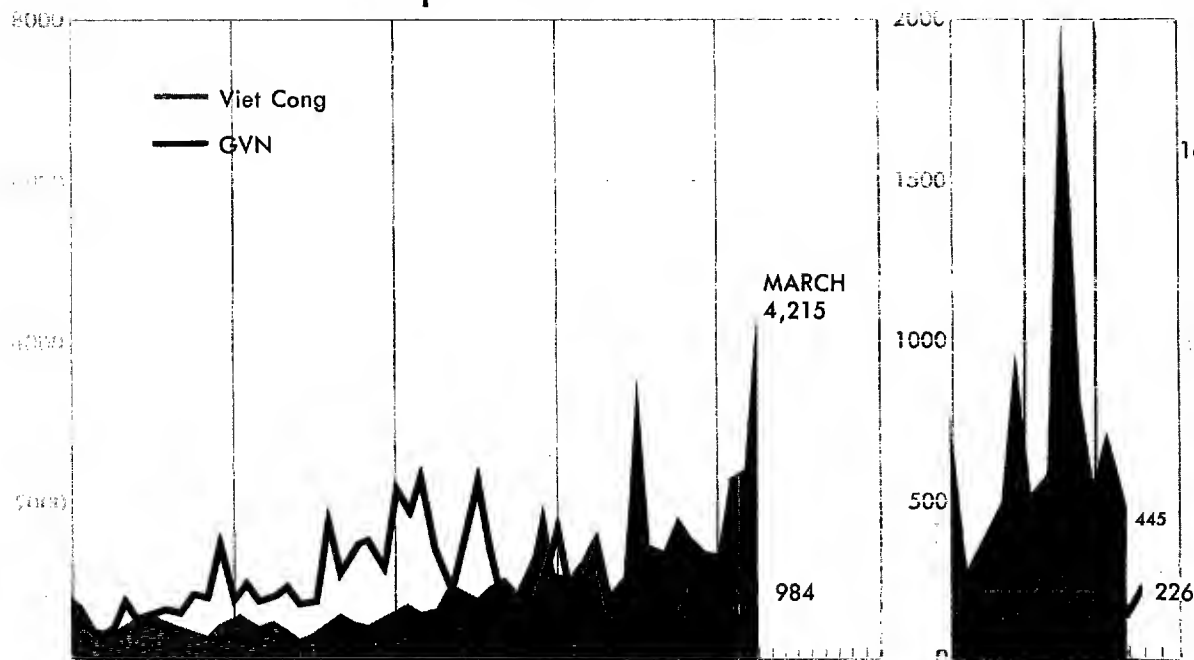
2. The losses on 26 April bring to 16 the number of US aircraft lost during the past eight days as large-scale raids have been carried out against major military and industrial targets in the Hanoi-Haiphong area. That US planes have been striking key targets at the center of Hanoi's air defense system accounts, in part, for the unusually high level of SAM, MIG, and AAA activity and resulting US air losses.

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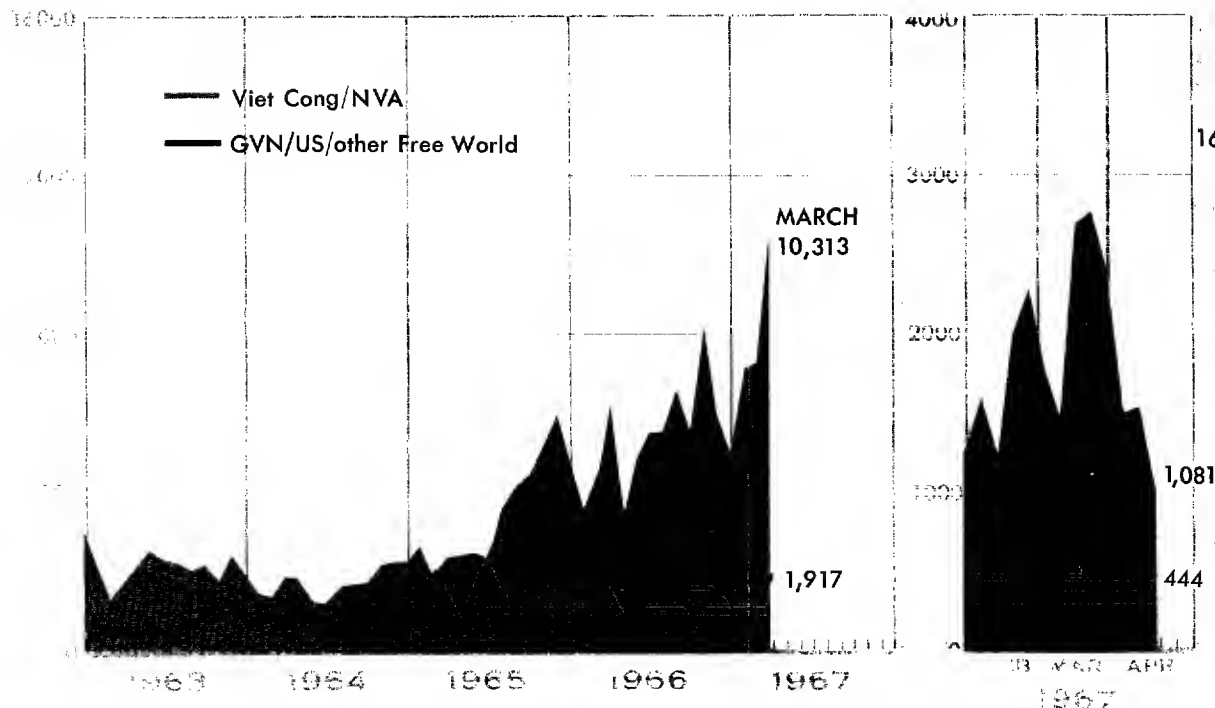
26 April 1967

III-1

Weapons Losses



Personnel Losses (Killed only)*

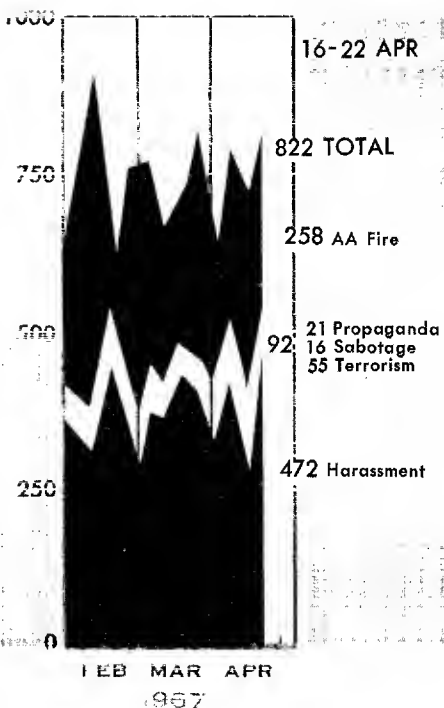
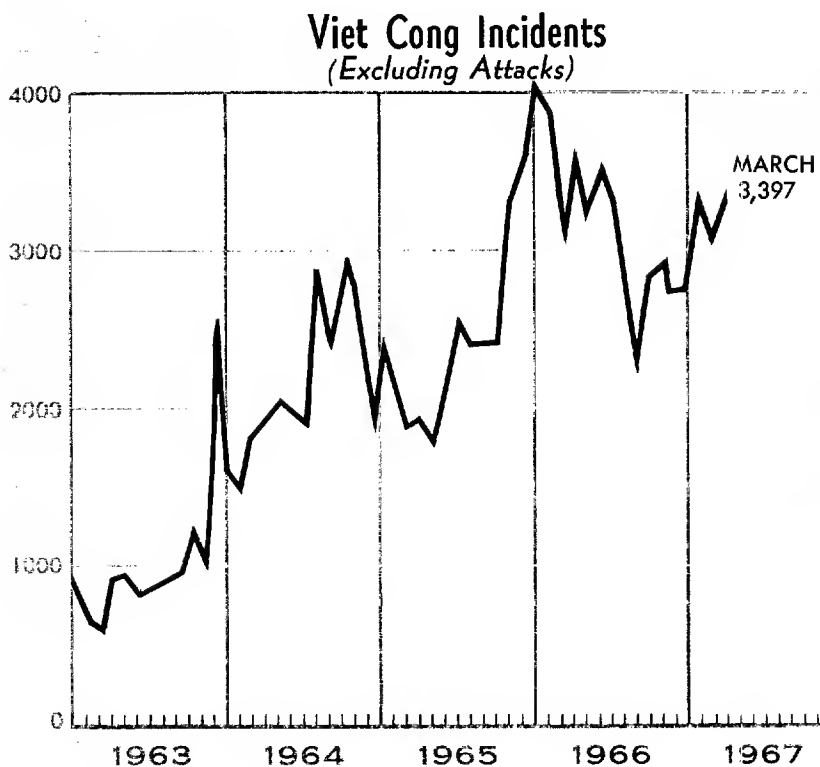
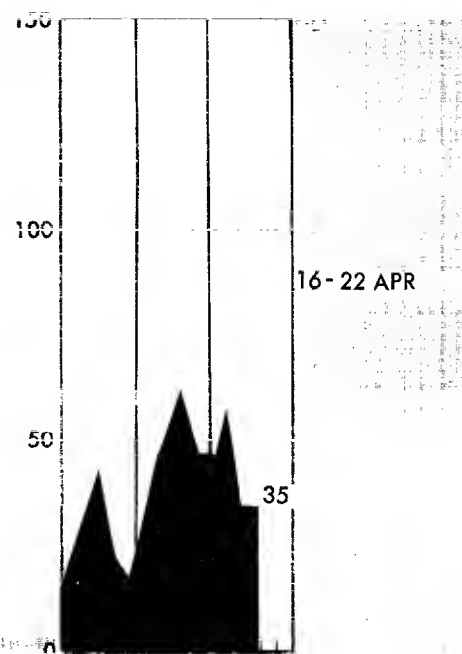
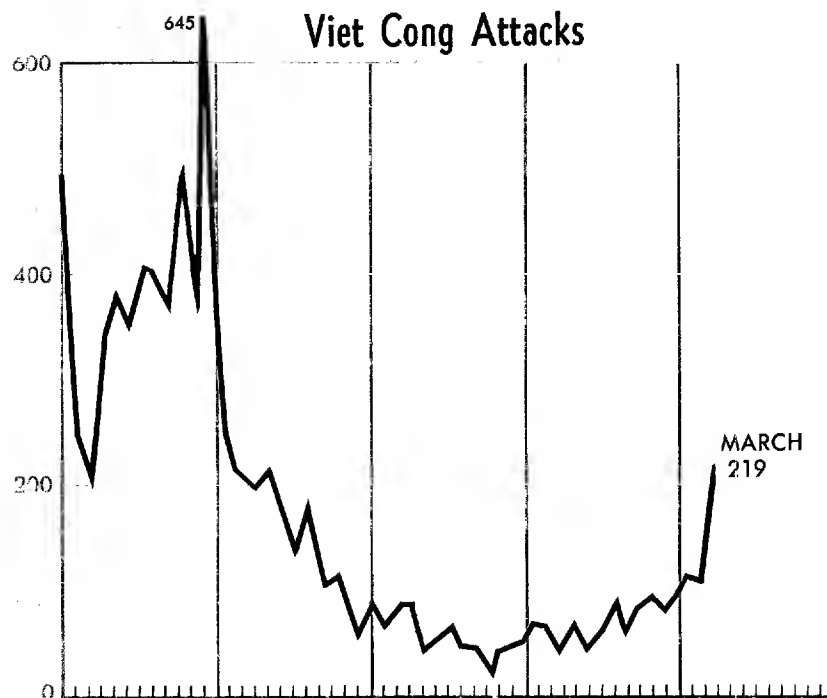


US Casualties to Date: Killed 9,226 Wounded 55,119 Captured 151 Missing 384

*Due to a change in the reporting of personnel losses, beginning 12 February 1967, the weekly figure will represent only personnel killed

66419 4-67 CIA

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25X1

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